

Researching your Educational Influences in Teaching and Learning

Jack Whitehead, Edge Hill University and the University of Cumbria.

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Abstract

This presentation is focused on enhancing the professionalism of educational practitioners as we ask, research and answer questions of the kind 'How do I improve my educational practice' It is based on a view of professionalism that includes our educational responsibility to research such questions and to contribute the educational knowledge we generate to the global knowledge-base of education as we engage in our own continuing professional development.

It is grounded in the assumption that we are all interested in improving our educational influences in our teaching and learning and that we have all used the following form of action-reflection cycles, either intuitively or explicitly in improving our practice. I am thinking of action-reflection cycles where we are aware that our practice could be improved in terms of the educational influences we are having in our own learning and in the learning of others. By an action-reflection cycle I mean that we express a concern when we don't think that our values are being lived as fully as they could be. We imagine ways we could improve our practice and choose to act on one of the possibilities through an action plan. As we act we gather data to enable us to make an evidence-based judgement on whether our practice is improving. We evaluate our practice and modify our concerns, ideas and practice in the light of our evaluations (see

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/arlivingtheoryplanner.pdf>).

In researching educational influences in our teaching and learning I am suggesting that we have an educational responsibility to go further than implementing an action-reflection cycle by generating and sharing a validated, evidence and values-based explanation of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within our practices are located. I refer to these explanations as living-educational-theories. These explanations are different to the explanations that are generated by educational researchers whose theories are grounded in the disciplines of education, such as the philosophy, sociology, psychology and history of education. The difference is that education researchers derive their explanations from the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of a discipline of education. Living Educational Theory Researchers generate their explanations of educational influence in learning as they explore the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational practice?'

I shall focus on the practitioner-research of Branko Bogner & Marica Zovko (2008), Joy Mounter (2008) and Sally Cartwright (2015) to emphasise the uniqueness of the constellation of values used by individual practitioners as explanatory principles in explaining their educational influences in learning with their pupils and students.

Bogner, B & Marica Zovko, M. (2008) Pupils as action researchers: improving something important in our lives – see <https://ejolts.net/node/82>

Mounter, J. (2008) Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory? - see <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/joymounterull.pdf>

Cartwright, S. (2015) Sally Cartwright Master Educator. The posthumous award ceremony at the University of Bath – see <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/sallycartwrightmastereducatorjw140415.pdf>

These researchers work with 6 and 10 year old pupils and 17 year old students as co-researchers in generating their explanations of educational influences in learning. I shall emphasise the importance of validating these explanations through the mutual rational control of critical discussions that seek to enhance the comprehensibility, the evidence, the sociocultural and sociohistorical influences and the authenticity in and of the explanations.